



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

December 13, 2004

# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS 22 FUGITIVES DURING 3-DAY OPERATION**

*16 are criminals, including arsonist, predator, rapist, drug dealer*

RALEIGH-DURHAM, N.C.—U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention and Removal officers arrested 22 fugitive aliens between Monday and Wednesday during an operation targeting fugitive illegal aliens and criminal aliens between here and Morgantown, N.C.

Sixteen of those arrested had criminal convictions that included arson, child molestation, aggravated assault, rape, possession of a firearm, and possession and sale of cocaine.

“Most of these individuals are dangerous criminals who pose serious threats to law abiding citizens in these North Carolina communities,” said ICE Field Office Director John A. Mata, who leads the ICE's Office of Detention and Removal in Atlanta. “We are committed to restoring integrity to the nation's immigration system. It is our objective to identify and find these aliens and remove them from the country as quickly as possible.”

The operation --the first of its kind in North Carolina-- is part of a long term national strategic plan to apprehend and remove the more than 400,000 immigration fugitives and 80,000 criminal aliens who have been ordered to leave the country, but are hiding to avoid deportation.

In Fiscal Year 2004, which ended Sept. 30, ICE removed a record 157,000 aliens from the United States. Nearly 53 percent were criminal aliens. ICE also apprehended more than 11,000 fugitive aliens, a 112 percent increase from March 1 through Sept. 30, 2003, when ICE began tracking fugitive apprehensions.

Fugitive aliens are those who have been ordered to depart the United States by an immigration judge, but have elected to ignore the lawful order. Criminal aliens are those who have been convicted of an aggravated felony. They are eligible for immediate removal.

"Under the Department of Homeland Security's unified approach to law enforcement, we work with our local partners to target specific individuals," said Mata.

In addition to Mata's detention and removal officers, ICE special agents from the Winston-Salem and Raleigh Durham offices teamed up with police officers from the Morgantown, Winston-Salem, Burlington, Durham, and Raleigh police departments, and sheriff's deputies from Forsyth, Burlington, Randolph, and Granville counties.

Those arrested are from either Mexico, Nigeria, Guatemala, El Salvador, Columbia, Honduras, Vietnam or Italy.

All have been placed in detention and will be deported once necessary travel documents are obtained.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.*